



CZECH REPUBLIC: U.S. AND CZECH VETERANS CELEBRATE LIBERATION BY GENERAL PATTON



Ambassador Graber greets the veterans, May 6, 2008. [Mirek Konvalina, U.S. Embassy Prague]

More than 50 towns throughout western and southern Bohemia, Czech Republic celebrated their liberation by General Patton's troops at the end of World War II. The annual event kicked off with a convoy of vintage U.S. army vehicles gathering for a salute in front of the U.S. Embassy in Prague

before setting off on a tour throughout the region, culminating with celebrations in Pilsen. U.S. Ambassador to Czech Republic Richard Graber hosted a lunch for veterans that was attended by General Patton's grandson, George Patton Waters, as well as many generations of veterans' relatives. He also opened an exhibition featuring artistic cooperation between the University of Western Bohemia and Miami University of Ohio that was the product of Fulbright exchanges. Ample positive press coverage highlighted a wreath-laying ceremony at Pilsen's "Thank you, America" monument, attended by veterans, their families, and citizens of Pilsen, many of whom still remember liberation and were visibly moved by their encounters with the veterans.

ESTONIA: U.S. EMBASSY JOINS NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO CLEAN ESTONIA



Estonians learned about the U.S. Embassy in Tallinn's involvement in a nationwide environmental clean-up project that had a massive impact. Approximately 50,000 volunteers pooled their efforts to clean all the illegal dumpsites across the country in just one day. *Estonian* mentioned that two teams from the U.S. Embassy participated in the event, and one newspaper also reported that a young Estonian girl noticed the Embassy group cleaning up the dumpsite and brought her father along to help with the cleanup. The little girl's father said that he had tried to clean up the illegal dumpsite earlier, but it was too big a job for just one person.

Ambassador Phillips and Mrs. Phillips in action cleaning an illegal dumpsite near the U.S. Embassy in Tallinn, May 3, 2008. [DCM Karen Decker, U.S. Embassy Tallinn]

DENMARK: CULTURAL ENVOYS KICK OFF STREET DANCE PROGRAM

Break dancer Isaac Barron and hip hop artist Rosie Bichon began their three-week U.S. State Department-funded Cultural Envoy program in Denmark. The program kicked off with classes at Dance in Northwest, a dance program based in northwest Copenhagen, an area with a large multi-ethnic population. Barron and Bichon also conducted a workshop at Gerlev Sports Academy, which later this summer will host the opening camp in the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen's three-year, \$900,000 "Taking the Lead" sports and leadership program for young people from immigrant neighborhoods. Cultural Envoys Barron and Bichon will teach three weeks of classes in Denmark's three largest cities (Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Odense).



Isaac Baron teaches at Dance in Northwest, May 17, 2008 [Richard Johannsen, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]

LITHUANIA: MONTH OF AMERICAN CULTURE IS A RESOUNDING HIT



Ambassador Cloud speaks at a packed arena in Siauliai, May 2008. [Rona Rathod, U.S. Embassy Vilnius]

The second annual Month of American Culture in Lithuania was officially brought to a close with a stellar performance by the American and Lithuanian chamber music group Trio Cavatina. To bring to light some of these lesser known forms of art, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius planned several musical performances and workshops and hosted a well-received independent film festival. Highlights of the month-long programs included a performance by percussionist Steve Houghton from the University of Indiana-Bloomington, a concert of Frank Zappa's music performed in symphonic style—complete with pipe organ—at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic and broadcast on Lithuanian National Television, and an independent film festival organized in partnership with the American Film Institute's Project 20/20. The Month of American Culture attracted a broad audience across Lithuania and received wide media attention, with pieces appearing in print, on television, on the radio, and even in magazines for travelers to Lithuania.

MACEDONIA: SPORTS SUMMER CAMP OFFERED FOR 400 YOUTH

Over 400 youth participated in a four day camp where they learned about sports, teamwork and the environment through playing field hockey, soccer, baseball and other games. They also learned about the importance of taking care of their surroundings and participated in a cleanup along the Vardar River that left the area spotless. The events were held in the village of Novo Celo and in Skopje, and over 20 teachers from local schools received training in environmental education and coaching from local non-governmental organization Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS). The book series *Why Should I* by Jen Green, which had been previously translated into Macedonian, Albanian and Roma, served as the basis for the environmental component of the camp. The event was made possible thanks to a grant approved by the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, OFFS, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and with volunteers from the Peace Corps.



Kids play field hockey at the "Healthy Kids, Healthy Environment" camp, May 2008. [Ryan Rowlands, U.S. Embassy Skopje]



The Malta Independent, April 25, 2008

MALTA: JOURNALIST PARTICIPATES IN U.S. ELECTION TOUR

A promising young journalist's first-hand reporting of the primaries brought the U.S. election process into the homes of many Maltese, thus highlighting the openness of U.S. society and the commitment to transparency in the electoral process. The U.S. Embassy in Valetta sent journalist Francesca Vella, from the Malta Independent media group, on a U.S. election tour of Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. The media group publishes two English-language newspapers, *The Malta Independent Daily* (circ. 12,000) and *The Malta Independent* on Sunday (circ. 21,000). Ms. Vella filed a full-page story, "Hillary's Million Dollar Question," about the U.S. primary election season and her observations on the primaries in Philadelphia. She plans to publish more articles about her experience in the U.S. in the coming weeks.

HUNGARY: NATIVE AMERICAN PHOTO EXHIBIT OPENS

U.S. Ambassador to Hungary April Foley opened a photographic exhibit of North American Indians and their traditional culture to a crowd of over 200. The exhibition, "Sacred Legacy," pays homage to American photographer and ethnographer Edward S. Curtis, whose museum-quality prints from the late 1800's and early 1900's illustrate the broad diversity of North American tribes. In her opening remarks, Ambassador Foley emphasized the importance of recognizing the contributions of all American minorities to the enrichment of U.S. society. *Ambassador Foley opens photo exhibit of Native American culture, May 28, 2008. [Attila Nemeth, U.S. Embassy Budapest]*



KOSOVO: U.S. CULTURAL ENVOYS CHANGE PUBLIC IDEAS OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE

The U.S. Embassy in Kosovo's efforts to promote the arts is helping to build a flourishing civil society and increase long-term collaboration and mutual understanding between the U.S. and Kosovo. An example of this initiative was the two-week visit of U.S. State Department-funded Cultural Envoys Colleen Cintron and Marie Morrow who worked with various dance groups in Kosovo. After ten days of close cooperation and hard work, the Cultural Envoys and the Ballet Troupe held a "Contemporary Dance Dialogue Show" at the National Theater of Pristina. The show defied the clichés of contemporary dance in Kosovo and gave a new perspective of the style. Over 300 people, including the new Minister of Culture of Kosovo, attended the show.



Cultural Envoys Marie Morrow (left) and Colleen Cintron (right) dance with Kosovar traditional dance ensemble, Shota, May 2008. [Aferdita Krasniqi, U.S. Embassy Pristina]

KOSOVO/MACEDONIA/ALBANIA: MEDICAL DIPLOMACY CROSSES BORDERS

The goal of the Balkans Breast Cancer Initiative (BBCI) is to raise breast cancer awareness, reduce cultural taboos on the subject and reach out to women of all ethnicities and religions in the region, emphasizing that cancer knows no borders. As part of this initiative, the U.S. Embassy in Pristina brought over U.S. State Department-funded Strategic Speaker, Dr. Balazs "Ernie" Bodai, breast cancer surgeon and creator of the U.S. Breast Cancer Research Stamp, to visit Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. The BBCI is a broad partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Pristina, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Public Health, the Telemedicine Center, medical experts, and the sole breast cancer non-governmental organization in Kosovo. The U.S. Embassies in Pristina, Skopje and Tirana enthusiastically welcomed Dr. Bodai, and he received an overwhelmingly positive reception and a great deal of media coverage. A digital video conference with the U.S. Embassies in Podgorica and Zagreb expanded his reach. In Kosovo, the Director of the Postal Service confirmed that Kosovo will issue the Stamp to coincide with the first-ever Breast Cancer Awareness Walk.



Dr. Bodai describes the U.S. Breast Cancer Stamp to a group of women from Mitrovica, May 2008. About 24 women of all professions and ethnicities were invited: Serb, Albanian, Turkish, Ashkali and Roma. [Merita Musmurati, U.S. Embassy Pristina]

SLOVAKIA: HISTORIC U.S.-SLOVAK PHOTO EXHIBIT OPENS

The U.S. Embassy in Bratislava-sponsored historic photo exhibit, "Slovakia, Slovaks and Connections on Historic Postcards and Photographs," opened in Piestany, Slovakia with a crowd of library goers and media in attendance. The exhibit is the result of an international collaborative project in conserving photographs at the Slovak National Library, funded by the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, and is traveling throughout Slovakia. The Getty grant of \$15,000,000 will build Slovak expertise so that it can become a central European hub for teaching and research in restoration. One theme of the exhibit is the Slovak-U.S. connection over the years—introducing "pioneers" of Slovak life in the U.S., explaining the social and sports life of Slovaks in the U.S., the contribution of Slovak-Americans to the beginning of Slovak cinematography, and Slovak literature in the U.S.



Consular Officer Ann Meceda, who opened the exhibit, is interviewed by *Televizia Karpaty*, May 5, 2008. [Lea Mala, U.S. Embassy Bratislava]



Juan Carlos Navarro, a Spanish NBA player, with student participants from embassy basketball programs, April 29, 2008.
[Margaret Bond, U.S. Embassy Madrid]

SPAIN: NBA EVENT IS A SLAM DUNK WITH SPANISH KIDS

Spanish NBA player Juan Carlos Navarro visited with over 100 teenagers and highlighted the unifying effect of sports and how sports showcase fair play, diversity and teamwork, which cross cultural and national lines. Juan Carlos, also known as "La Bomba," is a point guard with the Memphis Grizzlies and a hero to Spanish youth. Navarro answered questions about his experiences in the U.S., his daily life and future prospects in the NBA. Some of the participants had previously taken part in the U.S. Embassy in Madrid-supported "Basketball in Education" program that encourages scholarship and athletics among youth through an annual tournament. Others had participated in last year's "NBA Cares" program, which resurfaced a school basketball court.

UK: 2008 U.S. ELECTION EVENT SERIES

The first of a three-event series on the 2008 U.S. election was organized by the U.S. Embassy in London in cooperation with local opinion pollster and events organizer YouGovStone. For this inaugural event, titled "Digital Politics -- Effects of the Information Age on the 2008 U.S. Election and Beyond," a panel of U.S. and U.K. experts examined how the internet and other forms of "new media" (blogging, social networks, video sharing, etc.) influence the conduct of the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign as well as electoral politics in the U.K. An audience of 170 opinion leaders engaged the panel on how these newer means of communication might affect the outcome of elections by shaping the way that voters get information and support their candidates, both financially and through peer persuasion. The second event took place in partnership with the English Speaking Union's Centre for Speech and Debate. The Centre is the world leader in providing support for the use of the English language in debate in an educational context. Two talented teams, including four members of the English national youth debate team, debated the proposition "This House Would Reform the U.S. Electoral System." The audience left with a better understanding of the complexities of the U.S. electoral system.



Sebastian Farquhar of the Opposition puts off a challenge from the Proposition's Sam Barker during a youth debate on the U.S. electoral system, May 29, 2008. [Sarah Jane Mayhew, U.S. Embassy London]

MOLDOVA: TOP U.S. COACHES TRAIN MOLDOVAN WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAMS



Coach Dorrance reviews game strategy with the Moldovan girls team before the exhibition match, May 10, 2008. [Alexandru Leanca, U.S. Embassy Chisinau]

The head coach of the women's soccer program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Anson Dorrance, and his colleague Chris Ducar visited Moldova to train the Moldovan women soccer Under-17 and Under-19 teams. The training program concluded with an exhibition game attended by U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Kelly Keiderling and the president of the Moldovan Soccer Federation, who was very impressed by the significant progress the girls showed after only one week of training and praised the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau for the opportunity. The clinic was aimed at making women's soccer more internationally competitive and providing hope and inspiration to young athletes. Increasing opportunities for young women enhances efforts to fight human trafficking in the country.

POLAND: MILITARY NURSE RECEIVES WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD

U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe honored Sergeant Elzbieta Grodzka, Staff Nurse, 2nd Field Hospital, Polish Land Forces, as Poland's nomination for the Secretary of State's 2008 Award for International Women of Courage. Ambassador Ashe congratulated Sergeant Grodzka in a short speech and presented her with a certificate and glass plaque, while Brigadier General Przekwas, representing the General Staff, praised Grodzka for her courage and leadership in her work in Iraq and Poland. Sergeant Grodzka voluntarily deployed four times to Iraq to not only serve her own country but also to assist the Iraqi people on their journey to freedom and democracy. Serving as a Staff Nurse with the 2nd Field Hospital, Sergeant Grodzka repeatedly demonstrated exceptional courage while defending Iraq from the threat of terrorism. She is also committed to improving the image of women within the Polish military, who continue to struggle for recognition.



Ambassador Ashe with Women of Courage Award winner Sergeant Elzbieta Grodzka, May 8, 2008 [Wojciech Mandal, U.S. Embassy Warsaw]



Workshop participants from Primorskiy krai, April 2008. [Sr. ELF Judy Elliott] Over 43 English language teachers from the Primorskiy krai region attended a seminar at the regional teacher training center in Vladivostok on strategies for enhancing English classroom methodology. The workshops addressed grammar activities, listening, writing skills, and tasks similar to those that will be found on the high-stakes Russian National Exam. Next year, Primorskiy krai will begin piloting this exam, and the teachers expressed interest in the materials handed out during the workshop to help them in the future. This is the eighth workshop given by Senior English Language Fellow Judith Elliott at the Primorskiy krai training center. This series has helped strengthen ties with teachers in the region and has promoted the active involvement of English teachers in the Far Eastern English Language Teachers Association (FEELTA), a professional organization.

RUSSIA: TEACHER TRAINING IN VLADIVOSTOK

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